



# THE ARKANSAS POST GAZETTE.

NEWSLETTER OF ARKANSAS POST NATIONAL MEMORIAL, GILLETT, ARKANSAS

Summer 2003    Volume 3, Issue 3



Replacing the Transformers at the Maintenance Area

## Downed Trees and Power Outages: Winter and Spring brought excitement and closures to the Post

Ice storms in February and March brought down trees throughout the park, knocking out the power, and blocking the picnic area road.

In mid- March the park endured a series of power outages as the vintage mid-1960s transformer at the park boundary 'gave up the ghost.' One thing led to another, and the crews from First Electric had to replace the entire underground electrical line throughout the park in early April. Archeologists from the Arkansas Archeological Survey and the National Park Service were present to collect any artifacts found during the extensive trenching.

Power has been restored throughout the park, and landscaping is being done in order to return the park to normal.

## NOW SHOWING: Arkansas Post: Echoes of the Past

The new visitor center Film Arkansas Post: Echoes of the Past was shown for the first time to the public on Saturday, April 26th. This 23 - minute film features live action footage of living historians, recreating scenes from the Post's history to provide a brief overview of the history of Arkansas Post for park visitors.

Shown on demand, Echoes of the Past has been viewed by over 700 visitors in the month and a half since its debut.



French Marines and their families relax around the dinner table in this scene from the new film.

### Arkansas Post Online

The Post's internet presence continues to grow:

- Two 'online books' have been added to the park's website: Ed Bearrs' 1974 report on the Colbert Raid and The Founding of Arkansas Post by Gregory Carrera. Both books are linked from the park's home-page (<http://www.nps.gov/arpo/>)
- The National Park Service's Revolutionary War website now includes a short summary of the Colbert raid (<http://www.nps.gov/revwar/>)

# Superintendent's Scribblin's



After reading a recent article published in the Chicago Times, which dealt with the fall in visitation to our National Parks, I found it enlightening and thought I would discuss some of the causes presented, my thoughts about them and their repercussions. First, the whole premise of the piece was that our society today is changing from one that appreciates and seeks solace from the wilderness to one that avoids the "inconveniences" of dealing with a wild setting.

Society today seems more preoccupied with passive recreation (electronic games, TV, computers and spectator sports). To me, this means a great loss in appreciation of the treasures of our country. I was privileged to have grown up in the west and exposed to the wonders of hiking and camping in the mountains and deserts. I'm sure that those experiences influenced my thinking, but it saddens me when I realize that a large portion of the population does not share my love of the outdoors. When you consider, in a democracy such as ours, it is the opinion of the majority that determines the fate of the nation (politically, socially and aesthetically), we stand to lose our natural resources to the forces of indifference and economic gain.

To put it in a more practical light, the National Park Service is currently engaged in a conversion of our maintenance operations to a commercial software program called Maximo. The process is very logical and makes decisions based on the cost-effectiveness of a particular choice. But at the very core of this process is a value called "Cost Replacement Value (CRV)" – the worth in dollars and cents of the resources under consideration. This process works just fine when we are dealing with the cost of a modern building or a road or even a waterline, but try to apply a value to a forest, a field of wildflowers or even historic sites and the whole process becomes an exercise in personal preferences. Oh, there is a "factor" applied for historic value, but who knows what that should really be? Is the CRV really a matter of the number of board feet in a forest, or the cost to reseed a field? What is the CRV of the last of a species? I fear that in our attempts to digitize and justify our efforts and increase our efficiency, we are ignoring aspects of our world that make life worth living.

From a cultural basis, what is the CRV of a battlefield? Do we base the value on the number of soldiers that died, the outcome of the battle or maybe the "value" of the lessons learned from the conflict? In all these examples, a numeric value is meaningless except for generating a false sense of logical progression. Facts cannot be proved by arbitrary assumptions, nor can efficiency be determined by meaningless number manipulations.

I do not advocate that we trash our electronic entertainment or our modern conveniences, rather I would hope that we can achieve a balance between the natural and the man-made world without losing either. As we become more urbanized as a population, it becomes more critical that we allow ourselves places to escape from the regimented control of our lives and find the peace that comes from sitting by ourselves surrounded by natural sights and sounds. Sometimes it does us good to realize that we do not control everything and no matter how well we plan, it is beyond our abilities to even assign a value to some of the simplest things around us.

*Edward E. Wood, Jr.*

# National Parks and the Louisiana Purchase

*Arkansas Post is only one of a large number of National Park sites with connections to the Louisiana Purchase. During this bicentennial year we have highlighted some of the other parks and how they relate to the Louisiana Purchase. To complete this series, we explore parks beyond the Purchase territory, to the Pacific Ocean.*

## Nebraska

### Homestead National Monument of America

Representing one of the more significant outcomes of the Louisiana Purchase, the Homestead Act of 1862 was one of the most significant and enduring events in the westward expansion of the United States. By granting 160 acres of free land to claimants, it allowed Western immigrants a chance to live the American dream.



## Nebraska / South Dakota

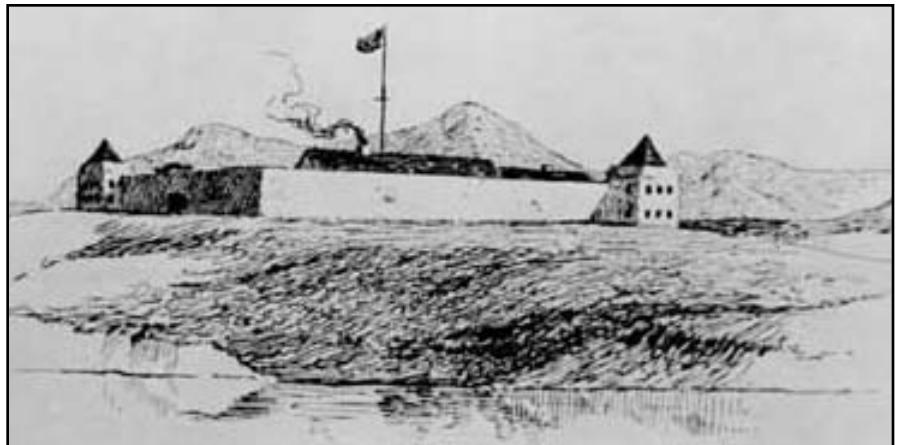
### Missouri National Recreational River

America's longest river, the "Big Muddy" is steeped in stories about American Indians, Lewis and Clark, fur traders, and steamboat captains. The river's role in the settlement of the Great Plains is celebrated in two free-flowing reaches along the Nebraska-South Dakota border. Between Gavins Point Dam and Ponca State Park, NE, it still exhibits its dynamic character with a variety of islands, bars, and chutes. Between Fort Randall Dam and Running Water, SD, it represents the natural landscape of pre-settlement days. These segments also provide habitat for several endangered and threatened bird and fish species.

## North Dakota

### Fort Union Trading Post NHS

The fur trade was one of the first benefits of the Louisiana Purchase; John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company built Fort Union Trading Post in 1828 near the junction of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers in what is now North Dakota, at a location recommended by Meriwether Lewis. In its heyday, the post was a busy place and employed up to 100 people. It became the headquarters for trading buffalo hides and other furs with the Assiniboiné, Crow, Cree, Ojibway, Blackfeet, and Hidatsa Tribes.



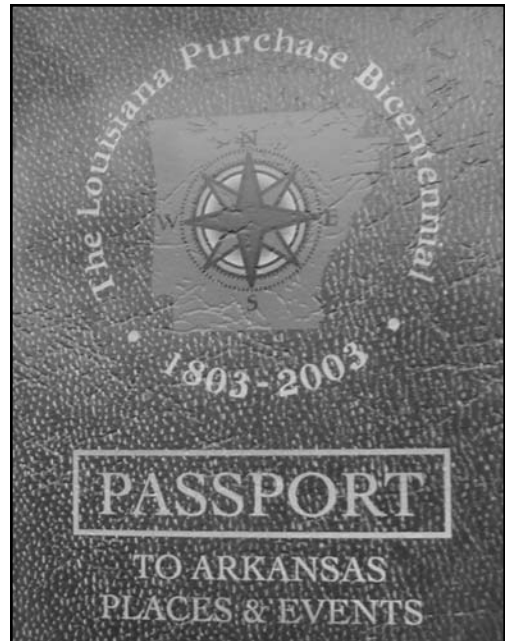
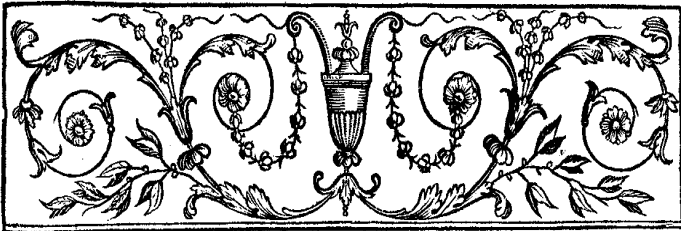
## Knife River Indian Villages

The 1,758 acre site preserves historic and archaeological remnants of the culture and agricultural lifestyle of the Northern Plains Indians. More than fifty archaeological sites suggest a possible 8,000 year span of inhabitation, ending with five centuries of Hidatsa earthlodge village occupation. The circular depressions at the three village sites are up to 40 feet in diameter and are a silent testimony to the people that lived here.

# Staff Notes

♣ Park Ranger Eric Leonard was gone for three weeks of 'maternity leave' in March and early April for the birth of his son. Samuel Leonard was born March 24, weighing in at eight pounds, eight ounces.

♣ Park Guide Steve Edwards completed his training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) March 20, and returned to the Post for a short time before transferring to Ozark National Scenic Riverways in mid- May.



## **Arkansas Post is participating in the Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Passport program**

The Arkansas Post National Memorial is an official site where the collectible Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial passport can be obtained. The passport is a way to encourage Arkansans to travel the state and enjoy the many events planned to celebrate the Louisiana Purchase.

Arkansas Post National Memorial is one of 28 "must-see" destinations around the state of Arkansas related to the Louisiana Purchase. Once a traveler has his passport, he can get it stamped at each of the 28 sites, making the passport a souvenir keepsake.

Passport sites are located in each region of the state. In the state's capital city, passports and stamps are available at the Arkansas State Capitol, Cox Creative Center, Historic Arkansas Museum, the Old State House Museum and the Museum of Discovery. Some of the other sites around the state that the passports and stamps are available include:

- Plantation Agriculture Museum State Park
- Toltec Mounds Archeological State Park Visitor Center
- Clarendon Welcome Center
- Arkansas Post Museum State Park
- White River National Wildlife Refuge
- Delta Cultural Center
- Lake Chicot State Park
- Louisiana Purchase Historic State Park
- Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources
- Hot Springs National Park
- Lake Dardanelle State Park
- Fort Smith National Historic Site
- Shiloh Museum of Ozark History
- Rogers Historical Museum
- Parkin Archeological State Park
- Village Creek State Park
- Old Davidsonville State Park
- Powhatan Courthouse State Park

Travelers should contact the individual site or [www.lapurchase.org](http://www.lapurchase.org) for specific information regarding the site's Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial events.

## **HOT OFF THE PRESS**

From the pages of *The Arkansas Gazette*.  
Saturday, May 13, 1820

Mr. Crittenden returned to this place on Tuesday last from Kentucky, where he had gone for the purpose of forwarding to Washington City the memorials, &c. of the General Assembly, in February last. We are happy to learn that the President of the United States, and the Attorney General, have approved of the measures adopted by Mr. Crittenden, in advancing this territory to the second grade of government; and have also decided favorably on the legality of the election of the Legislative Council. We are promised further particulars, which will be given next week.

We also learn, from the above source, that Congress had determined on rising the first of this month, but on its being ascertained that a minister extraordinary from the court of Spain, (Gen. Veves,) had arrived at an eastern port, they postponed their adjournment until the 15th.

## A soggy time was had by all - The 2003 Colonial Encampment

Mother Nature conspired against living history in February, as the weekend of the colonial encampment, February 22-23 was accompanied by torrential rains and cold weather.

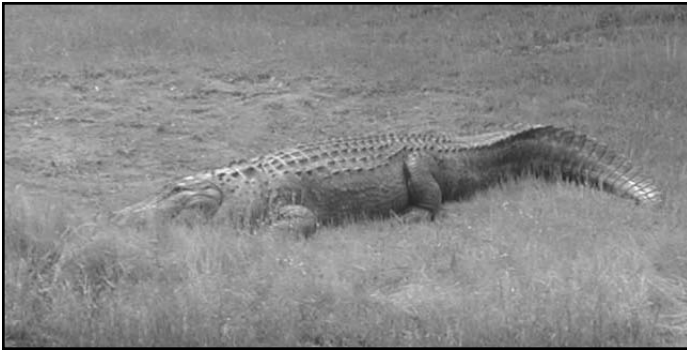
Nevertheless, a small group of living historians from four states braved the weather to bring alive the Post's colonial past. Galen Ewing, who served as a park ranger at the Post in the early 1990s, came down from his current posting, Fort Scott NHS, to supervise the scheduled flintlock musket demonstrations that were cancelled due to the rain.

The visitors who braved the rain for the event learned first hand what it was like to be a wet and cold resident of Arkansas Post's Colonial past. Programs were presented discussing colonial era French clothing and acts of piracy on the Arkansas River during the Revolutionary War.

Planning is already underway for the next Colonial Encampment in March, 2004, when we will commemorate the 200th anniversary of the transfer of Arkansas Post from the Spanish to the United States of America. Look for more information on this event later this year.



French Marine Bob Gill braves the rain with the newest in French Fashion.  
(Photo by Frank Scott, DeWitt Era-Enterprise).



## Alligator Safety

With the warm season in full-swing, alligators can again be easily spotted in Post Bayou or the Park lake on a regular basis. Please keep the following items in mind when viewing alligators in and around the park:

- Never get closer than 15 feet (5 meters) to an alligator. If it hisses or opens its mouth in defense, you should back away even farther. All animals are wild and should be treated with respect at all times.
- It is illegal to feed or disturb any animal or plant life within the boundaries of Arkansas Post National Memorial. When people feed alligators, they lose their fear of humans.

## YCC Crew already hard at work

During the first week of June, the Post saw the arrival of fresh faces to assist in a number of projects over the summer. The park relies on hiring summer youth to complete projects that the permanent staff would not have time to accomplish. This year's Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) crew consists of work leader Joseph Byers and crew members Blake Holiman, Chuck Hubsch, Justin Sullivan, Heather Wilkerson and Susan Davis.

The crew will work through late July on a number of projects around the park, including resurfacing the nature trail and groundwork at Osotouy.



# People of the Post: Henri Joutel

## La Salle's lieutenant and the first man to describe Arkansas Post.

*The history of Arkansas Post is full of notable characters that are not only important to that of the lower Arkansas and Mississippi River Valleys, but to both Arkansas and American history as a whole. In each issue, it is our desire to present a brief sketch of an individual who, in some way, had a profound association with or impact on the historic Post of Arkansas.*

Henri Joutel had been La Salle's neighbor in France, and was a trusted confidante. He served for two years as post commander of Fort Saint Louis, La Salle's ill-fated Texas colony, and following La Salle's death led the survivors from Texas through Arkansas to the Mississippi River. Joutel was one of only six members' of La Salle's expedition to return to France in 1688, and his journal provides the first written account of Arkansas Post.

The most commonly used translations of Joutel's journal were done a century ago. However, recently the Texas State Historical Association published a new translation of the journal, based on the most complete version available. Below is the journal entry relating the survivors arrival at Osotouy and the first Arkansas Post:

*Finally after passing through these woods, we arrived at the banks of the river which was very beautiful, wide at least like the Seine at Rouen but with a more rapid current. On the other side of the river, on the bank, we saw a large cross standing like those erected by missionaries in France and elsewhere wherever they go. By the cross was a house of the French style, and below that the Indians' village was located. As soon as we saw the cross, we determined that these must not be Englishmen. Besides the bands of Indians who came to meet us, We perceived others crossing the river in boats. They were painted and smeared with various colors: some of*



*them in red, white and black with swan and Canada goose down on their heads dyed red. Others had outfitted themselves with bison horns according to their whim. They resembled more demons than men. But this was their custom, although quite a ridiculous one.*

*When we had been on the river bank a while, gazing at the village and the boats coming and going, we saw two clothed men come out of the house; each fired a musket shot to greet us. In the village, an Indian also fired a shot; the Indian, who must have been the chief, actually shot first. We responded to their shots with several volleys to the great pleasure of the Indians who were with us who expressed their delight and urged us to fire. While we were firing, boats came and went loaded with people. One of the men from the house embarked on a boat to come and identify us, as they were concerned about who we were as we were to learn from him who they were. As soon as he was close to us, we asked him what country he was from. He responded that he was French and of the people with Tonty, commander of Fort Saint Louis of*

*the Illinois, and that this tribe was that of the Acansas.*

*When we told him, for our part, that we were some of La Salle's people, he landed as fast as he could. I have difficulty expressing the joy one and the other of us felt, he to learn the news, and us above all to find ourselves having arrived safely in the midst of our people.*

### For further Reading:

Joutel, Henri, 1640?-1735; edited and with an introduction by William C. Foster ; translated by Johanna S. Warren. The La Salle expedition to Texas : the journal of Henri Joutel, 1684-1687. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1998.



# The Post Trader:

## News and Information about the Park Bookstore

New or recently arrived items at the bookstore:



### 1936 Arkansas Centennial Stamp

Price: \$2.50

A mounted display containing a three cent stamp issued in 1936 to honor Arkansas' statehood centennial. A stylized view of Arkansas Post is featured on the stamp, along with the Old State House, and modern Arkansas Capitol.

### Arkansas State Seal pin

Price: \$3.00

A lapel pin featuring the official seal of the state of Arkansas.



### Souvenir Cotton Bale

Price: \$5.95

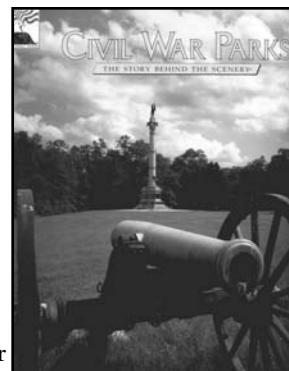
A miniature cotton bale, representative of the types used to transport Cotton along the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers during the 19th century (just not the full-scale 250 pound size).



### Civil War Parks: The Story behind the Scenery

Price: \$8.95

Part of a popular series of photograph books about the National Parks, this book includes a brief description of the Battle of Arkansas Post, along with information on other Civil War battlefields protected by the National Park Service.



For further information on Eastern National or the Arkansas Post National Memorial Bookstore you can visit [www.eParks.com](http://www.eParks.com) or contact the park at (870) 548-2207



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arkansas Post National Memorial commemorates the earliest European settlement in the Lower Mississippi valley. First established in 1686, the Post was an important staging point for Mississippi River trade between New France and the Gulf of Mexico. Situated along the Arkansas River, the small settlement here blossomed into the first capital of the Arkansas Territory.

### Arkansas Post National Memorial

1741 Old Post Road  
Gillett, AR 72055

### Phone

870 548-2207

### E-mail

[arpo\\_historian@nps.gov](mailto:arpo_historian@nps.gov)

### Internet

<http://www.nps.gov/arpo/>

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

## Arkansas Post Wants You!

Volunteering is an American tradition that over the years has made an immeasurable contribution to communities, organizations and individuals throughout the country. Today's volunteers are active, dynamic, creative individuals of all ages who possess the skills, desire, patience and time to accomplish a wide variety of tasks.

Volunteers are accepted from the public without regard to race, creed, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability. For more information about volunteering at Arkansas Post National Memorial, contact the Volunteer Coordinator, by phone at 870-548-2207 or by writing to Arkansas Post National Memorial; Attn: VIP Coordinator, 1741 Old Post Road, Gillett, Arkansas 72055





National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arkansas Post National Memorial  
1741 Old Post Road  
Gillett, AR 72055

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

## Upcoming programs and events at Arkansas Post NMem.

Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Programs:

All programs begin at 2:00 P.M. Saturdays, in the visitor center.

June 28, 2003	The Revolutionary War at Arkansas Post
July 5, 2003	Who owned the Post?
July 12, 2003	What's in a Flag?
July 19, 2003	"The most disagreeable hole in the universe" – Life in Colonial Arkansas
July 26, 2003	The Fur and Animal trade on the Arkansas River
August 9, 2003	Who owned the Post?
August 16, 2003	What's in a Flag?
August 23, 2003	"The most disagreeable hole in the universe" – Life in Colonial Arkansas
August 30, 2003	The Fur and Animal trade on the Arkansas River

The Arkansas Post Visitor Center is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. except Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Years Day. Park information, exhibits, park film and educational sales items are available.

Arkansas Post National Memorial grounds including the picnic area are open from 7:00 a.m. to dusk every day.

